United Nations A/C.1/51/PV.16

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Wednesday, 6 November 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Sychou . . . . . (Belarus)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Agenda items 60, 61 and 63 to 81 (*continued*)

Introduction and consideration of draft resolutions submitted on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.43.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt): On behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.43, namely Algeria, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, China, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka, I have the pleasure to introduce the draft resolution under agenda item 70 entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space".

This draft resolution, while taking into account some technical updates, is broadly based on last year's resolution submitted by Sri Lanka under the same agenda item.

The objective of this draft resolution is evident. The sponsors believe that further efforts on this important disarmament issue have yet to be undertaken within the multilateral setting of the Conference on Disarmament, through its Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, to complement bilateral efforts in order to conclude a legally binding agreement that would avert the dangers to international peace and security of a possible resumption of an arms race in outer space.

Hence, particular importance is given in this draft resolution to the re-establishment within the Conference on Disarmament of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. In this regard, it is indeed regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament failed in 1994 and 1995 to take the important step of reactivating the Ad Hoc Committee as requested by the General Assembly in two consecutive resolutions.

Nevertheless, we believe that the current positive international environment should bring us steps closer to the achievement of this important goal in a spirit of cooperation and understanding that could not have prevailed or even been sought in a bygone era.

Therefore, we should benefit from such a window of opportunity to achieve in outer space what was achievable or equally complex and controversial issues such as the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the nuclear test ban and the bacteriological and chemical weapons conventions, together with others yet to come. In our view, the 1997 session of the Conference on Disarmament could be an appropriate time to tackle this issue in a comprehensive manner, building upon the work done by the Ad Hoc Committee since its establishment in 1985.

Some changes were made to the current text in order to galvanize the widest possible support. The most prominent of these is the elimination or consolidation of redundant paragraphs and the adoption of new language for operative paragraph 10 of last year's resolution, namely resolution 50/69, which has become operative paragraph 8 in the current draft, so as to urge all States taking interest in conducting activities in outer space to keep the

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Conference on Disarmament informed of the progress of bilateral or multilateral negotiations relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, if any such negotiations take place outside the Conference on Disarmament.

The draft resolution consists of 17 preambular paragraphs and 9 operative paragraphs. In the preambular part, the General Assembly recognizes the common interest of all humankind in the exploration and peaceful use of outer space for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic and scientific development, and recalls its previous resolutions on the matter. It also recognizes that prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger to international peace and security, reaffirms the relevant provisions of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, and reaffirms the provisions of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, in which it is stated that in order to prevent an arms race in outer space, further measures should be taken and appropriate international negotiations held in accordance with the spirit of the Treaty. It further emphasizes the paramount importance of strict compliance with existing arms limitations and disarmament agreements relevant to outer space, including bilateral agreements, and with the existing legal regime concerning the use of outer space, including wide participation in such a legal regime.

The preambular part also notes the work done by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space since its establishment in 1985, including the examination and identification of various issues, existing agreements and proposals, as well as further initiatives relative to the prevention of an arms race in outer space; it therefore regrets the inability of the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee in 1996, and emphasizes the mutually complementary nature of bilateral and multilateral efforts in the field of preventing an arms race in outer space.

With regard to the operative part, the General Assembly reaffirms the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space and the readiness of all States to contribute to that common objective. It also reaffirms its recognition that the legal regime applicable to outer space does not by itself guarantee the prevention of an arms race in outer space, that there is a need to consolidate and reinforce the regime and enhance its effectiveness, and that it is important to comply strictly with existing agreements, both bilateral and multilateral. The General Assembly also emphasizes the necessity of further measures, with appropriate and effective provisions for verification, to prevent an arms race in outer space.

To that end, the Conference on Disarmament is requested in operative paragraph 6 to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space at the beginning of 1997, and to provide it with a negotiating mandate with a view to conducting negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements to prevent an arms race in all its aspects, taking into account the work undertaken by the Ad Hoc Committee since 1985.

The remaining operative part calls upon all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and the prevention of an arms race in outer space and to refrain from actions contrary to the objectives and to relevant existing treaties, and urges them to keep the Conference on Disarmament informed of the progress of any bilateral or multilateral negotiations relating to the prevention of such arms races so as to facilitate its work. Finally, the General Assembly decides to include the item entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session.

The co-sponsors hope that this draft resolution will be met with the support of the overwhelming majority of the delegations as a reaffirmation of our common interest in sustaining the peaceful uses of outer space.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of Germany, who will introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.5 and A/C.1/51/L.47.

Mr. Hoffman (Germany): I would like to introduce two draft resolutions, and I do this wearing two different hats. First, I would like to introduce, as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission this year, draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.5. This was sponsored by the Bureau, that is Colombia, Finland, Germany, Jordan, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Ukraine and the United Republic of Tanzania. The draft resolution has been prepared in a similar manner to that of previous resolutions on the Disarmament Commission, with only certain appropriate technical changes in the text as the circumstances warrant. This draft is the result of informal consultations among members of the Disarmament Commission and it is recommended by its Bureau. In this regard, I should like to draw the Committee's attention to

several paragraphs of this draft resolution which refer to the guidelines for international arms transfers, the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and the question of the agenda items for the 1997 substantive session of the Commission.

As you will recall, the Disarmament Commission after a long time was able to adopt by consensus at its 1996 substantive session a set of guidelines for international transfers, as reflected in operative paragraph 2. In operative paragraph 3, the General Assembly would endorse the guidelines for implementation. With regard to operative paragraph 4, I am pleased to report that the Disarmament Commission has indeed made significant progress in the discussions on its agenda item on the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in spite of the divergent views expressed. It is clear that further efforts are still required. However, to reflect this positive circumstance, it was proposed in an informal meeting this morning and endorsed by the Bureau to change operative paragraph 4 in such a way that it reads:

> "... significant progress in the discussions on its agenda item regarding the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament."

Operative paragraph 9 concerns the substantive items for the 1997 session of the Disarmament Commission in accordance with the adopted three-item phased approach. You can see in the text before you that we have only dots there. At an informal meeting this morning, the Commission agreed on two items for its 1997 substantive session and the Bureau has agreed to include these in the draft resolution. These are: first, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned; second, the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. These items will therefore be listed under operative paragraph 9 (a) and (b) of the draft resolution. There has so far been no agreement on the third item. Accordingly, footnote 5 will be changed to read:

> "The new item on conventional weapons will be decided by the Disarmament Commission at its 1996 organizational session."

Let me make this absolutely clear. We will agree to have an item on conventional disarmament, and this will be decided at the organizational session in December at which we will decide on the whole setting of items to be discussed next year.

These changes to the draft resolution will be included in document A/C.1/51/L.5/Rev.1, which should be available tomorrow. With these brief remarks, I hope that this draft resolution will be adopted without a vote, as has been the case in previous years.

Now I change hats, and as head of the German delegation I would like to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.47, "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures".

This draft resolution has been sponsored by Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Since the draft resolution has been developed in a joint effort by the delegations of Romania and Germany, I would like very much very to thank the delegation of Romania for its close cooperation.

During the thematic debate my delegation noted with satisfaction the broad support that was continually given to the concept of confidence-building measures, at the global as well as regional levels, as a means to preserve international peace and security. My delegation also strongly supports this assessment, and let me reiterate that in our view transparency and objective information on military matters are of particular value.

The draft resolution before us takes up the issue of the United Nations reporting system on military expenditures, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 35/142 B on 12 December 1980 and is designed to promote transparency at a global level. This instrument complements the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. While the Register focuses on international arms transfers within specific weapon categories, the standardized reporting system on military expenditures gives a more general overview of national defence policies through the disclosure of national spending on military personnel, forces' operations and maintenance, procurement and research and development.

Thus, the standardized reporting system on military expenditures is certainly not the only instrument but is still an important and valuable tool which — and this is expressed in the seventh preambular paragraph of the draft resolution — can contribute significantly to decreasing

levels of suspicion and to increasing confidence-building among States.

The valuable potential of this reporting system has been acknowledged by all Member States several times through the repeated adoption without a vote in 1992, 1993 and 1994 of previous resolutions under the same title, which are recalled in the first and second preambular paragraphs.

In the third and sixth preambular paragraphs, the draft resolution notes and welcomes the decision of many Member States to participate in the standardized reporting system. Regrettably, however, participation in the annual reporting continues to be disappointing, and thus the insufficient number of replies gives rise to concern. It is for this reason that the draft resolution not only calls upon Member States in operative paragraph 2 to report annually to the Secretary-General their military expenditures for the latest fiscal year for which data are available, but also in operative paragraph 4 requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States and make recommendations on necessary changes to the content and structure of the standardized reporting system in order to strengthen and broaden participation.

This approach depends, however, to a large extent on the cooperation of Member States. That is why in operative paragraph 5 the draft resolution calls upon all Member States to provide the Secretary-General with their views on ways and means to strengthen and broaden participation, including necessary changes to its content and structure.

It must be our common goal to prevent this valuable instrument of confidence-building, which has always been unanimously agreed on by the community of Member States, from being undermined through neglect and, thereby, also to protect the credibility of the United Nations General Assembly resolutions. Operative paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the draft resolution therefore stress the need for action by suggesting a return to annual consideration of this matter after a year's pause and to take up this issue at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

This resolution has no financial implications, since operative paragraph 4, based on consultations with the Secretariat, requests the Secretary-General to submit a report within existing resources.

Let me finally express our sincere hope that the community of Member States will again be able to adopt this resolution by consensus as it did in previous years.

Mr. Neagu (Romania): Since this is the first time I have spoken under your chairmanship, Sir, allow me to congratulate you most warmly on your election as Chairman of the First Committee at the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that under your able guidance our deliberations will be entirely successful.

I asked for the floor in order to refer to draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.47 on "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures" that has just been so ably introduced by the representative of Germany, Ambassador Hoffman.

Increased transparency in the military field leads to increased confidence and thus to the creation of the necessary environment for the reduction of military activities, armaments, troops and budgets, as a sine qua non requirement for strengthening peace and increasing stability. Openness, transparency and confidence-building measures have clearly gained global significance.

Strengthening confidence-building activities along the lines provided for in this draft resolution helps to prevent misunderstanding and miscalculations that might lead to military confrontation. If information on military capabilities and openness in military affairs are available, that will provide the opportunity to reduce the risk of military confrontation, thereby achieving a realistic reduction in military budgets.

The United Nations standardized reporting of military expenditures, which has been in place for more than a decade, has proved to be instrumental in this regard. This was particularly the case for Europe, where these standards were taken by member States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as a basis for the elaboration of a concrete Europe-wide system of national reporting of military expenditure. As is well known, conventional forces in Europe have been reduced greatly.

The demise of the cold war and ideological confrontation creates conditions for sustained general participation in reporting to the United Nations. Regrettably, however, as underlined in the report of European Union member and associated States, including Romania, overall participation in such reporting on the part of Member States of the United Nations barely exceeded 20 in 1995 and is thus very low. This is why we consider well-placed the call contained in operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution for all Member States to report annually, by April, to the Secretary-General their military

expenditures for the latest fiscal year for which data are available, using the reporting instrument as recommended in resolution 35/142 B.

In the meantime, we consider that this reporting system could be improved to ensure more active and broader participation. The request addressed to the Secretary-General in draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.47 to seek the views of Member States and to make recommendations on necessary changes to the content and the structure of the standardized reporting system of military expenditures in order to strengthen and broaden participation is of particular importance to this end.

Finally, I would like to thank the German delegation for its excellent cooperation in this matter, and to thank all the sponsors of this draft resolution for their support. I join Ambassador Hoffman in calling for the adoption of this draft resolution by consensus, as has been the case with similar texts in previous years.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Mali, to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.35.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*interpretation from French*): It is once again an honour and a pleasure for my delegation to introduce for the third consecutive year a draft resolution on assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them, draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.35. I do so on behalf of the following other sponsors: Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Niger and Togo.

The initiative in the draft resolution reflects the commitment of the sponsors to the major goal of the Organization: general and complete disarmament. This initiative enables us to draw the attention of the international community to the disastrous consequences of small arms, particularly in developing countries, where they are generally responsible for fueling conflicts. This has contributed to introducing into our Organization the now well-known concept of micro-disarmament.

The purpose of the draft resolution is to obtain from the international community assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them. In this context, the General Assembly would consider that the circulation of massive quantities of small arms throughout the world impedes development and is the source of increased insecurity.

It would also consider, in the preambular part of the draft resolution, that the illicit international transfer of small arms and their accumulation in many countries constitute a threat to the populations and to national and regional security and are a factor contributing to the destabilization of States.

The preambular part goes on to indicate that the Assembly is gravely concerned at the extent of the insecurity and banditry linked to the illicit circulation of small arms in Mali and the other affected States of the Saharo-Sahelian subregion. The Assembly would take note of the first conclusions of the United Nations advisory missions sent to the affected countries in the subregion by the Secretary-General to study the best way of curbing the illicit circulation of small arms and ensuring their collection. Finally, the General Assembly would recall the actions taken and those recommended at the meetings of the States of the subregion held at Banjul, Algiers and Bamako to establish close regional cooperation with a view to strengthening security.

In the light of those considerations, the General Assembly, in the operative part of the draft resolution, would welcome the initiative taken by Mali concerning the question of the illicit circulation of small arms and their collection, and would welcome the action taken by the Secretary-General in implementation of this initiative in the context of resolution 40/151 H of 16 December 1985.

The Assembly would thank the Governments concerned in the subregion for the substantial support that they have given to the United Nations advisory missions and welcome the declared readiness of other States to receive the United Nations Advisory Mission.

By paragraph 4, the Assembly would encourage the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in the context of the implementation of resolution 49/75 G and of the recommendations of the United Nations advisory missions, to curb the illicit circulation of small arms and to collect such arms in the affected States that so request, with the support of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and in close cooperation with the Organization of African Unity.

The General Assembly would note by paragraph 5 that, as part of its efforts to halt the flow of small arms into Mali and the Saharo-Sahelian subregion, the Malian Government oversaw the destruction, at the "Flame of Peace" ceremony held at Timbuktu on 27 March 1996, of

thousands of small arms handed over by ex-combatants of the armed movements of northern Mali.

Finally, the draft resolution encourages the setting up in the countries of the Saharo-Sahelian subregion of national commissions against the proliferation of small arms and requests the Secretary-General to continue to examine the issue and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session.

We thank the sponsors of the draft resolution for their support. I am very pleased on their behalf to call upon all States to adopt it by consensus, as in previous years.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.42.

Mr. Calovski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): On behalf of my delegation and of the delegations of Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Norway, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and Zaire, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "The maintenance of international security — prevention of the violent disintegration of States", which is contained in document A/C.1/51/L.42.

By this draft resolution the General Assembly will decide to take up the item "The maintenance of international security — prevention of the violent disintegration of States" at its fifty-third session, as an important part of its efforts to strengthen international security and to promote international cooperation. This is, as we all know, a very serious subject, particularly in my country's region. Good preparation is necessary for useful and productive deliberations on this subject. It is for this reason that the draft resolution requests all States and relevant international organizations to communicate to the Secretary-General their views on the subject.

The starting point of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.42 is respect for the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, strict compliance with the principle of the inviolability of international borders among States, and good-neighbourliness and friendly relations among States.

The draft resolution takes into account the emergence of new opportunities for building a peaceful world, and considers that the violent disintegration of States may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.

Furthermore, draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.42 stresses the importance of the activities of international organizations with the aim of preventing the violent disintegration of States, of maintaining international peace and security and of promoting international cooperation for development. It calls upon all States, relevant international organizations and competent organs of the United Nations to continue to undertake measures in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations as appropriate to help prevent the violent disintegration of States. In short, draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.42 advocates undertaking preventive measures in the maintenance of international security. It goes without saying that undertaking such preventive measures will have direct and positive effects on the disarmament process.

We have endeavoured to produce a text that will meet the Committee's approval without a vote.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all representatives for their suggestions, cooperation and support, and particularly for understanding the need for our initiative. Finally, I would like to note, that we requested the Secretariat to issue a revised text listing the names of the sponsors and deleting the word "governmental" from paragraph 4. It was explained to us that owing to financial reasons this was not possible.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of the Netherlands to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.18.

Mr. Ramaker (Netherlands): As this is the first time that I am officially addressing the Committee, let me first of all congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. We are very pleased to see you in the Chair, and we assure you of our continued support.

During the informal thematic debate last week, my delegation made a statement on confidence-building measures, including transparency in armaments. On that occasion, I stressed the importance of increasing confidence between States in the absence of real and concrete conventional arms control and disarmament. Increased confidence, in our view, promotes stability and thus enhances international peace and security.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is a practical confidence-building measure aimed at achieving

enhanced peace and security worldwide as well as regionally. Today, I introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.18 on transparency in armaments and, as members know, a considerable place is reserved in that draft resolution for the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. I introduce this draft resolution on behalf of 91 sponsors, but in order to save time I will not read them out.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.18 seeks to confirm the importance of enhancing transparency in armaments and confidence-building in general. It addresses the importance of the Register as a confidence-building measure. The Register aims to be a rather simple and straightforward measure to help avoid misperceptions about other States' conventional strength and to provide early warning against destabilizing accumulations of conventional weapons. That transparency is created by data provided by Member States to the Secretary-General on their imports and exports of those seven categories of conventional arms which can be particularly destabilizing if accumulated in quantities beyond legitimate self-defence needs. Of course, the absence of imports and exports is also important knowledge contributing to more confidence. Therefore, States not having transferred arms in a particular year are also requested to report this in a "nil return" to the Secretary-General. All entries are stored in the Register, which is published each year in order to provide States with transparency in international arms transfers. In this way, the Register can have a modest but direct impact on security relations between States globally, but also in the regions where it matters most.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.18 renews the call upon Member States to provide the Secretary-General with these data. It welcomes the report of the Secretary-General in document A/51/300 and the addenda that have thus far appeared with the Register data on arms transfers in 1995. Again more than 90 States have provided data, covering the vast majority of the arms transfers in the world. This is solid participation, but of course it is never enough. It is therefore appropriate that it was decided as long as two years ago that a group of governmental experts should once more study the issue and prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development. Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.18 recalls this decision of the General Assembly. The expert group will meet next year and will assist the Secretary-General in drawing up his report with findings on the scope of and participation in the Register. That report will be presented to the General Assembly with a view to a decision at its next session on how to maintain and possibly enhance the Register.

As I have said on previous occasions when we discussed this issue, the support for the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is solid. This solid support was also confirmed by the willingness of many delegations once more to sponsor a draft resolution on this subject. I would like to thank all the 91 other sponsors for expressing their support for the important confidence-building measure that the Register is. It shows that the idea of transparency in armaments is firmly rooted in all regions of the world where nations are convinced of the usefulness of maintaining openness in relation to transfers of conventional arms.

Let me take this opportunity to address another issue. This morning the delegation of Sweden introduced draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.40 on the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Injurious Effects (CCW), and the Netherlands wishes, as a sponsor, to express its full support for that draft resolution. Traditionally, the Netherlands and Sweden work very closely together on draft resolutions on this item with a view to encouraging States to adhere to the Convention. We are pleased with the outcome of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the CCW, held in Geneva last May. This was an important achievement strengthening the humanitarian law of warfare, in particular by further restricting the use and transfer of landmines and prohibiting a whole category of new weapons, namely laser weapons. We call upon States which have not done so to accede to the Convention and to express their consent to be bound by the amended Protocol II and the by the new Protocol IV of the Convention.

The Chairman: I now call on the Representative of Afghanistan, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.16.

Mr. Osman (Afghanistan): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Measures to curb the illicit transfer and use of conventional arms", contained in A/C.1/51/L.16

The draft resolution recognizes that massive quantities of conventional weapons and especially their illicit transfer, are most disturbing and dangerous phenomena and are often associated with destabilizing activities and violations of human rights. The availability of weapons encourages certain groups to bypass peaceful means in resolving disputes and turn to violence. In certain situations, mercenaries, terrorists and child soldiers are supplied with

weapons acquired through illicit transfers of conventional arms.

Mr. García (Colombia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

Paragraph 1 of this draft resolution welcomes the adoption by the Disarmament Commission of the report on international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H, as well as a text entitled "Guidelines for international arms transfers in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991". I commend Colombia for introducing that resolution five years ago. The draft resolution also invites Member States to enact adequate national legislation and/or regulations and adopt administrative procedures in order to exercise effective control over armaments and the export and import of arms, *inter alia*, to prevent trafficking in illicit arms and to bring offenders to justice.

I would like to draw attention to two changes in paragraph 2 (a); these are not substantive changes. Please insert the words "in order" after the word "procedure", and replace the words "to prevent" with the words "with the aim of preventing".

In order to promote peace and develop cooperation among all States, it is our common cause and responsibility to strive to fulfill the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations which call for the maintenance of peace and security. I extend my appreciation to the delegations which sponsored this draft resolution, and urge the Committee to adopt this draft resolution by consensus, as it did with a similar text last year.

Mr. Ok (Cambodia) (*interpretation from French*): As this is the first time I have addressed the First Committee, I would like to convey to Ambassador Sychou my delegation's congratulations and best wishes on his election to the Chairmanship of our Committee. We also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

As a country strewn with landmines, the Kingdom of Cambodia strongly supports draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.46, which was introduced to the First Committee by the United States delegation on Monday, 4 November 1996. My delegation would like to thank the United States for its tireless work to increase the number of sponsors of the draft resolution on an international agreement prohibiting anti-personnel landmines. The ever-increasing number of sponsors clearly shows the concern of all States at the danger posed by these weapons. This is a clear demonstration of the international community's will and ability to deal successfully with the threat of anti-personnel landmines.

Since the number of mines laid indiscriminately throughout the world every year is rising, not falling, my delegation believes that it is not enough merely to intend to eliminate these weapons. For our children to be able to walk freely and peacefully in the world, all States must take action. We hope that the States that have said that they need these weapons to protect their troops will find other ways to do this in the future.

Until there is an international agreement to eliminate these weapons entirely, my delegation calls upon all States for humanitarian reasons to refrain unilaterally or collectively from using, producing, stockpiling or transferring these mines.

On 8 October 1996, in his statement in the general debate at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cambodia made the following comments about the problem of mines:

(*spoke in English*)

> "While we are addressing the issue of the CTBT and the ban on weapons of mass destruction, we should not overlook the issue of landmines in various parts of the world. Cambodia is the hardest hit nation in the world. The Royal Government and the people of Cambodia pay great tribute to all the generous donor countries that have assisted us in our efforts to rid the country of the scourge of landmines. But how many millions of these cold, cruel and silent enemies still await our unsuspecting and innocent civilian population in remote areas of the country near the western border? Banning them is an easy job. We need international support to fully eradicate them.
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> "In his message to the Review Conference of the States Parties to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons last April, His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk Varman, King of Cambodia, appealed to all countries and peoples, international organizations, States and Governments to take, in a universal consensus, concrete measures towards definitively outlawing, as soon as possible, the production, export, utilization and sale of mines." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 26th meeting, p. 15*)

(*spoke in French*)

The Kingdom of Cambodia expresses its belief that this draft resolution marks an important step in the right direction towards solving the worldwide crisis of landmines. My delegation does not exclude other complementary measures such as regional or international conferences. We deeply appreciate Canada's efforts and the success of the Ottawa International Strategy Conference "Towards a Global Ban on Anti-Personnel Landmines", which met at Ottawa last month. We also appreciate the willingness of countries such as Belgium and Switzerland to hold follow-up conferences.

It is time for all States to mobilize to make the complete elimination of these weapons a reality. In this spirit my delegation calls on all States to vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.46.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker on today's list.

As delegates will recall, at an earlier meeting of the Committee, the Chairman stated that an informal paper containing a list of all draft resolutions submitted under disarmament and international security agenda items arranged in appropriate clusters would be circulated in the Committee.

Following consultations with the Bureau of the Committee, the Chair is now in a position to present to representatives a suggested programme of action listing draft resolutions organized in 10 clusters, in accordance with the thematic approach adopted. The document is being distributed to members of the Committee. With the consent of the Committee, it is the intention of the Chair to proceed with the action on draft resolutions, to the extent possible, in the sequential order of the clusters. In following this procedure, the Chair will maintain the necessary degree of flexibility. To facilitate representatives' work, it is the intention of the Chair to give advance notice of the days on which action on a particular cluster will be taken up.

Delegations should bear in mind that before action is taken on each cluster, they will have an opportunity, if they wish, to make general statements, as opposed to explanations of position or vote, on the draft resolutions of each cluster.

Delegations will be able to speak in explanation of position or vote on any or all of the draft resolutions contained in a particular cluster before action is taken on the draft resolutions. After the Committee has taken decisions on all the draft resolutions contained in a given cluster, delegations will once again have an opportunity to speak in explanation of position or vote, if they wish to do so.

In order to enable the Chair to conduct the proceedings of the Committee efficiently, the Chair appeals to all delegates to make, if possible, one consolidated statement on the draft resolutions contained in a given cluster, in explanation of position or vote either before or after action is taken by the Committee.

I take it that all representatives have before them copies of the programme of work proposed by the Chairman, and I invite them to comment on it.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt): It is our understanding that this approach is going to be implemented in a flexible way, as it was last year, so that draft resolutions that are ready in clusters will be voted on and those that are still being dealt with in informal consultations will be taken up at a later stage. We would like to stress the importance of maintaining consultations with the leading sponsor of each draft resolution with regard to the timing of the vote on each draft resolution. With that understanding, I fully agree with the Chair's proposal.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): The practice to be followed this year is similar to that of previous years, with the necessary degree of flexibility, as the representative of Egypt has pointed out.

Mr. Sarna (India): I would just like to request a clarification. As I understand it, before action is taken on each cluster, delegations will have the opportunity to make a general statement on the cluster. Do I also understand that the explanations of vote also have to be made in a consolidated fashion for each cluster? Or would it be possible to make an explanation of vote before or after action on each draft resolution?

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): The idea is that, as far as possible, explanations of vote on the draft resolutions contained in a given cluster should be made, in one consolidated statement. That is the proposal of the Chair.

Mr. Elahi (Pakistan): Our understanding was that you, Sir, had suggested that it would be preferable for delegations to make a single statement, but that if a delegation felt that an individual item required a separate

explanation of vote, it would be able to give one. Could the Chair confirm that understanding?

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): We merely wish to facilitate, in an orderly way, the offering of explanations of vote and position. It is obvious that, whenever a delegation wishes to explain its vote or position on a separate basis, it is entitled to do so. The Chair will be flexible whenever such a situation arises.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) *(interpretation from French)*: Like previous speakers, I should like to have some further clarification. My understanding was that it was the Chair's idea to have a single explanation of vote covering a whole group of issues.

My delegation has some difficulty in agreeing with that suggestion. May I therefore ask the Chairman to be flexible and try rather to persuade delegations not to depart from our usual practice while at the same time avoiding lengthy explanations of vote.

The Acting Chairman *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Obviously, and as representatives have suggested, the Chair will be as flexible as possible. Insofar as possible, whenever an explanation of vote is given, we would prefer that various draft resolutions in the same cluster be included; but if a delegation wishes to make a separate statement, it can also do so.

This is merely a suggestion in order to help the Committee better to organize its work. It is not intended to prevent any delegation from expressing its views or explaining its vote on a specific draft resolution.

In light of these clarifications, may I take it that the Committee accepts the Chair's proposal; as contained in the document distributed?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.